

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 331 376

HE 024 432

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TITLE Mentoring Women and Minorities in Higher Education:
An Anecdotal Record.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 21p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints
(Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Deans; Career Development; College Faculty;
*Helping Relationship; Higher Education;
*Interprofessional Relationship; *Mentors; Minority
Group Teachers; Peer Relationship; Sex Bias; *Social
Cognition; Women Faculty

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the higher education literature concerning mentoring, examines the stages involved in the mentoring process, and presents an anecdotal account of a mentor/protege relationship. The literature review examines gender and race in mentoring. It reveals that mentoring is very important for females and minorities because of the obstacles they often face in career advancement, yet mentor pools are largely composed of white males. Cross-gender mentoring roles also bring difficulties, particularly involving female proteges who are reluctant to engage in any late work sessions or socializing with their mentor for fear of negative outside reactions or gossip. Four basic stages of a mentoring relationship are discussed: (1) initiation; (2) cultivation; (3) separation; and (4) redefinition. The stages define the progression of the relationship beginning with the protege's need for help and support from a mentor who is admired and respected, to the protege becoming independent and shifting the relationship to one of collegiality and friendship, or anger and permanent separation. Finally, an anecdotal record describes the various experiences and phases of a mentor/protege relationship between a new academic dean and a consultant, written from the perspectives of both persons involved. Contains 26 references. (GLR)

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**MENTORING WOMEN AND MINORITIES
IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
AN ANECDOTAL RECORD**

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Mentoring Women and Minorities in Higher Education:
An Anecdotal Record

During the past decade considerable research (Alleman, 1984; Bey and Holmes, 1990; Gray and Gray, 1985; Hall and Sandler, 1983; Hill et. al., 1988; Klauss, 1979; Knox and McGovern, 1988; Kram, 1983, 1985; Levinson et. al., 1978; Missirian, 1982; Moore, 1982, 1983; Phillips-Jones, 1982, 1983; Ragins, 1989; Rawles, 1980; Schulman and Colbert, 1987; Simone, 1987; Swoboda and Millar, 1986; and Zey, 1984) has been conducted on the mentoring process. Most of this literature supports the need for mentoring by: acquainting the less experienced employee with the workplace, nurturing performance and competence, promoting personal and professional well-being, developing professional contacts and networking, and providing access for promotion within and outside the organization. Mentors serve useful individual and organizational purposes in guiding the new initiate through transitional phases of development. They also provide access to information and power which may not normally be available. As more women and minorities enter administrative career tracks in higher education, access to potential mentors becomes increasingly critical.

Since diversity is a central value for many higher education institutions, an awareness should exist of the managerial responsibility for access. For women and minorities, then, mentoring may provide a more direct route into management offices.

This article briefly reviews the mentoring literature with an

emphasis on mentoring for women and minorities, examines the stages involved in the mentoring process, and presents an anecdotal account of the writers' experiences as mentor and protege in a teacher education unit in higher education.

Gender and Race in Mentoring

The reality in higher education is that many more white males serve in senior level faculty and administrative positions than women and minorities. This results in mentor pools that are exclusively male and white. Swoboda and Millar (1986) recommended a networking strategy for women (mutual enhancement of career development, homogeneity, and intensity) in academic administration when the barriers to mentoring are significant. Barriers may include lack of access to information, tokenism, stereotypes, and socialization practices (Noe, 1988). In a study comparing male and female proteges, Collins (1983) found that males received assistance in goal-directedness which included leadership development, risk-taking, and providing direction; whereas women received more affiliation assistance--encouragement and support, confidence boosts, and organizational visibility.

When barriers in the workplace are matched with cross-gender and race relationships, potential mentors may be reluctant participants. Ragins (1989) argued that mentoring may be essential for women because of individual, group, and organizational barriers to advancement; "mentors may serve to buffer overt and covert forms

of discrimination, and may help female proteges circumvent structural, social, and cultural barriers to advancement in organizations." The same conclusions may be true for minorities.

Females and minorities face the following: career ladders filled with white males; career paths filled with active and passive discrimination, and career decisions which are filled with forced choices between work, family, and personal life. Women in higher education administration encounter a lack of representation in institutional hierarchies coupled with negative sentiments and treatment (Lafontaine and McKenzie, 1985). Women college administrators considered their careers to be significantly more demanding than those of their male counterparts. Balancing the professional and personal can be difficult; and, a mentor may be able to provide direction (Bird, 1984).

Ragins and McFarlin's (1989) study of cross-gender mentoring roles found significant gender interactions for role modeling and social roles. However, cross-gender proteges are less likely than same-gender proteges to participate in after work social activities with their mentors. The underlying influence of sexual concerns and fear of the perception of others may have a distinct negative impact on cross-gender relationships. Women may be prevented from initiating mentor relationships because of sex-role expectations and lack of access to potential mentors (Ragins and Sandstorm, 1989).

Delicate in nature to begin with, mentoring relationships are

based on a level of trust and support which becomes more tenuous in cross-gender relationships. Fearing the potential for petty jealousies, angry spouses, office gossip, and perceived sexual favors, female proteges are less likely to engage in behaviors such as: after work meetings, late work sessions, or dinners than their male counterparts.

Stages in Mentoring

Just how does the mentor-protege relationship grow and develop? A number of researchers have identified relationship stages which develop during the mentoring process. These include Phillips-Jones' (1977) six stages from initiation to transformation; Ritchie and Thompson's (1984) four career development phases; and Gray and Gray's (1985) model for teacher induction. The mentoring models which most influenced the writers were created by Kram and by Zey. A brief description of each model follows.

Kram's research (1983) indicated that mentoring relationships follow four stages: Initiation-the mentor is admired and respected for competence, while the protege feels cared for, supported, and respected; Cultivation-a bond is developed because each individual discovers the value of relating to one another; Separation-protege becomes independent and competent, while feelings of loss characterize this stage and the relationship becomes less central; Redefinition-the relationship changes significantly into

collegiality and friendship or anger and permanent separation.

Zey (1984) identified four levels through which mentors and proteges progress. Level 1 occurs when the mentor is the teacher. The protege receives instruction and receives organizational inside information. In Level 2, the mentor provides personal support and psychological counseling to the protege. This occurs through confidence building, enhancing the protege's sense of self, and through "pep talks." Level 3 occurs when the mentor intervenes on behalf of the protege. The mentor intercedes for the protege, runs interference when appropriate, and stakes his/her reputation in the organization on behalf of the protege. Zey's Level 4 is identified as sponsoring. The mentor nominates, sponsors, and/or recommends advancement within the organization or to other organizations.

An Anecdotal Record

Acquiring her first deanship at an intermediate-sized, comprehensive university in New England, the protege found severe problems with the teacher education unit. Prior to beginning her tenure as dean, the State Department of Education made a five-year accreditation visit and concluded that 29 standards out of 42 (69%) failed or passed marginally. The state placed all education programs on two years probation. The new dean began the following August with these issues facing her. In the meantime, the university president contacted a potential consultant and mentor for the new dean.

The consultant had 15 years experience in higher education as an academic administrator, the last six as an education dean in a state institution similar to the one under discussion. The consultant had taken institutions through transitional phases previously. The president made plans for the consultant to work with the dean over an academic year to enhance teacher education through program review and curricular reform. Thus began an intense mentoring relationship that went through numerous changes over two years and can be characterized as involved, generative, creative, and positive.

What follows is an attempt to describe our experiences and the various phases of the relationship. In reflecting upon these experiences we concluded that each of us individually and the relationship itself passed through stages much like described in the literature. Out of these reflections is drawn a model which we present to you in the form of an anecdotal record.

1. Sizing Up Another:

Mentor and protege are introduced and assess each other as to potential feasibility for success as a mentoring pair. The individuals initiate an informal compact on roles and responsibilities.

Mentor:

At our first meeting, when the president indicated that he

wanted to contract for my services, the new dean sought to explore other options rather forcefully. This strategy upset the president and certainly did not endear her with me. However, I had to admire her boldness--new dean, not on the job for even a day, and trying to outmaneuver the president. In fact, I don't blame her for the resistance; she felt she wasn't being given the opportunity to make something out of a difficult situation.

My reaction to the dean was one of distance. I did not know her! Like many other women in higher education administration, she did not follow the traditional career path; and, because of that first meeting, I did not trust her. At the same time, I was frightened of the entire situation because of the time and skills required, and the physical distance between our two universities. I was also anxious because of the responsibility for this dean's professional growth. This latter role was difficult for two reasons: this was my first formal task at mentoring, though I had done this many times informally; and, most importantly, the protege never chose me as her mentor--we had no history, no observation of one another's skills or abilities, and no means of assessing whether we could be successful as a team.

Protege:

Middle-aged, divorced female, nontraditional route into administration, rapid movement as an academic administrator with little line experience, many sponsors and mentors--these

characterized my experiences prior to the deanship. The acting dean mentioned that the president wanted to bring in a consultant to work with the teacher education programs. I agreed to call AACTE to discuss possibilities. As I faced the first meeting with the president, I realized that the academic vice president would not be present. Further, the president mentioned that he wanted me to meet with a colleague during that session.

The president seemed cold and removed at that first meeting. His colleague sat in on the meeting. When the president suggested that the teacher education program be put into receivership, I spoke vehemently against that option. I was very uncomfortable that the academic vice president wasn't in on this discussion; apparently the vice president who had hired me was on a short-term contract and I might be too.

The president spoke about the positive aspects of having a consultant on this complex task. I was concerned! My job was on the line and I wasn't even on the job! My boxes were not unpacked and the future was very unclear.

2. Developing Trust:

Protege receives instruction in job responsibilities and skills, and organizational policies and procedures. Mentor supports the protege by providing support, sponsorship, counsel, protection, and growth opportunities.

Mentor:

My initial goal was to establish rapport--a sense of trust, support, and source of information concerning accreditation, organizational structure, operation, and development. This was difficult because of the situation and atmosphere I sensed. My decision was to be helpful while on campus and on the phone without forcing my opinions, ideas, or style of leadership on her. Whenever she asked for advice, I would respond as positively as I could by identifying alternatives and consequences from which she could choose.

This stage progressed with discussions, modeling, and support. I even initiated and prodded the protege to new activities so that she could build her confidence. During this stage, I felt more comfortable with her and began to appreciate her knowledge and skill as an administrator and leader. We both needed time to discover the personality, character, knowledge, and skill of the other, not only in making the mentor-protege relationship work, but in accomplishing our assigned tasks.

Protege:

I was aware that if you behaved like a protege, the potential mentor could decide whether or not to adopt you. By the time I started the deanship, I had decided that the best strategy was to use the consultant as mentor. I had been mentored by three academic males previously; each provided insight, access, career

direction, and support. Those mentoring relationships had powerful effects on me personally and professionally. Two of those mentoring relationships had not ended well; I felt that I was taking a risk with another male mentor.

The same day I started, my mentor started consulting. We worked together as a team and I took considerable guidance and direction from him. I was grateful for his knowledge and wisdom, but his style and interactions with the faculty were very different from mine. He was brisk, very well organized, and direct. His job clearly defined and time-constrained. My tasks were to keep the agenda moving, and to work closely with the faculty.

My strategy was to pick up and return the mentor to the airport. During these times I shared my perceptions and reactions of what was happening and what we were planning. His insights were very useful. After almost two months he was still testing me. One evening we had a long dinner together. By the time we were through, I knew that he was much more positive than I had thought; and, he now knew me both as a person and a professional.

3. Nurturing Growth:

Protege self-esteem is enhanced through confidence building, supportive talks, and even helping personal life of protege occasionally. It becomes important to the mentor that the protege succeed. An attachment is developed between the two.

Mentor:

Halfway through the project, building a sense of trust became very important. One particular conversation centered around how the protege was doing, where she was headed, and how the president perceived her ability. We discussed all aspects of the problem, where she fit in the scheme, and what I thought of her work. After that, the relationship began to grow so that a sense of trust and openness, which had been lacking, began to develop.

The protege shared her feelings of aloneness, both as an administrator and as a single woman. I shared how I had similar feelings as an administrator and as a single person during that time in my life. To this day we call upon one another for advice and support. This stage, more than any of the others, has meant the most to me and has had the most effect upon me.

Protege:

I wanted affirmation that I was headed in the right direction. "Lonely at the top" didn't even begin to describe how I was feeling. My whole life had been left in the Midwest and I was searching for meaning in my new environment. I'd been out of teacher education for over a decade. While I felt comfortable with my skills as an administrator, I needed to be tied into the mainstream of the discipline; my mentor provided information about the discipline for me. I began to feel that he had confidence in my abilities.

4. Intervening:

Mentor puts reputation on line on behalf of protege; he intercedes and runs interference. Mentor also functions as intermediary with other individuals and/or groups on behalf of protege.

Mentor:

Organizational intervention occurred a number of times during the last half of the project. This took the form of speaking positively on the protege's behalf with the president and acting vice president, functioning as an intermediary with other system administrators, and helping her acquire needed resources.

The primary intervention took place prior to the completion of the project. During a discussion with the president, I was asked for an evaluation of her performance and her future at the university (the president was not sure of her fit). I told him of my faith in her skill and abilities, provided a number of examples to support those claims, and told him of her vision, not only for the education faculty but for the other units under her direction. I indicated that I would stake my reputation on her, and would even return my consultant fee if she was not successful in the next academic year. (What an impetuous, impulsive thing to do, now that I look back on the incident!)

Protege:

The mentor let me know that what I was doing, personally and professionally, was appropriate. I was comfortable with my role, his role, and the direction of the teacher education program. The State Department of Education returned and we came from a 69 % rate of noncompliance to 7 %. We had done it together! One of the mentor's assignments for the president was to evaluate my performance; he confirmed that by letting me know the results of his evaluation. He put his reputation on the line for me and I was grateful.

5. Disengaging and Refocusing:

Protege becomes independent, competent, and has minimal need for mentor's day-to-day expertise. One or both parties feel a sense of loss in the relationship. Mentor and protege either develop a supportive friendship or go their separate ways.

Mentor:

Disengaging occurred at the completion of the project. The finality of "separation" had a dichotomous impact upon me. Delighted that the project was successfully completed, I realized I would miss the protege. On my last evening, we discussed what happened during the year, how the faculty had grown professionally,

how the university was better for our efforts, how we learned from each other, and how we would miss our personal and regular contact. The evening was most cathartic, helping to synthesize all the tasks, ideas, and feelings of the past year and put them in perspective.

At least three weeks went by before I got a call from the protege; I realized I was going through withdrawal pains! I missed talking and working with her--knowing what and how she was doing, how she was being received by others, and hearing about the university.

Since I've completed my work at the university, we talk regularly about both professional and personal concerns. We have seen one another a few times and discussed professional issues at length. But more than that, the calls and visits have reinforced a supportive friendship. I value this!

Finally, we decided we would pursue future scholarly endeavors together. We have done so in the form of presentations and manuscript publications. These have been a surprisingly positive outgrowth of my year-long experience as consultant and mentor.

Protege:

Separation, in a sense, was "forced" upon us--the reaccreditation and redesign of all teacher education programs was complete. I spent very little time reflecting about the completion of the project. There were so many tasks to complete, and so

little time to accomplish what was left.

The professional development opportunities I had in my first year of deaning were almost unlimited--I'd seen the field through the eyes of an expert and had been able to rely on the expert whenever I needed him. While my mentor wasn't a part of the university structure, his knowledge, expertise, and abilities shaped me significantly and provided a framework for my values and norms.

Over the year I have come to know my mentor in a variety of ways: his father Leonard passed away and we all grieved for him, and I met his wife Arlean and subsequently spent time with them at several national conferences. For me the personal relationship was just as important as the career development direction I was receiving.

Since that first year I consistently seek out his insight and guidance. I always try to bring him alternatives and then get his reactions to my proposals--they are thoughtful and helpful!

6. Sponsoring:

Mentor recommends protege for promotion, more responsibility, and advancement within and outside the organization.

Mentor:

Sponsorship is at its initial stages. I have helped her in a

recent application for a foundation fellowship, and have begun to nominate her for a few deanships that have a wider range of responsibility. I know from our conversations that I will be very involved in encouraging, supporting, and initiating career advancement and promotion opportunities. She deserves such recognition and works very hard at her craft.

Protege:

As the financial picture in New England has changed dramatically, I have asked whether it is wise to consider a move. In many respects I feel as if I came to stay awhile. However, support for higher education in this part of the world is not good. I know that my record will look spotty with only a few years in this position. Given career paths, waiting another year or so would allow me to seriously consider other types of institutions and positions.

Encouraged to test the strength of my credentials, I have done so in positions and institutions that are similar. I feel that I'm not ready for an academic vice presidency and I wonder where my models are for strong leadership by women in that position. From this vantage point, the deanship appears very attractive.

What I do know is that what started as a mentoring relationship has turned into a collegial one, I've developed a friend and colleague who is invaluable.

Implications and Conclusions

The research agenda on mentoring, especially for formalized programs and cross-paired relationships, is developing. More research is necessary in areas related to mentoring pairs of different sex and race, mentor power, and mentoring as a function of adult development. Of special interest will be research on mentoring pairs of cross-gender and race in formalized programs. This anecdotal approach is but one means which may be useful for insights into the nature of these relationships.

Mentoring at its best is an extension in commitment beyond the usual supportive and administrative functions of the leader. It is a type of learning relationship that focuses as much upon the personal as on the professional development of both individuals as it does on the protege acquiring specific skills. There is also much to be learned, acquired, and developed by the mentor as teacher, guide, counselor, and communicator. Like a marriage, mentoring relationships evolve as both individuals interact. The mentoring relationship requires an environment in which to develop. Only the two parties can make something of the relationship which may be mutually fruitful and developmental. The benefits to the individuals involved are abundant, and the opportunities for organizational growth are real.

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